

The Prairie Light Review

Volume 36 | Number 2

Article 60

Spring 5-1-2014

Sometimes I'm A Slow Learner

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College of DuPage

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Recommended Citation

Morris, Wilda (2014) "Sometimes I'm A Slow Learner," *The Prairie Light Review*: Vol. 36: No. 2, Article 60.

Available at: <http://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol36/iss2/60>

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Cats may hum, and dogs may sigh,
Crows may cackle, and men may lie,
Some may say doomsday is nigh,
But forever I'll stay under our sky
Whistling just the same.

Day may shatter, and dawn may break,
Cold may pierce and earth may shake,
All my days may joy forsake,
But forever I'll stay under our sky
Whistling just the same.

Wars may come and red be rain,
Fickle the friend, and many the vain,
Great the greed, and vast the pain
But forever I'll stay under our sky
Whistling just the same.

Angels may cry and devils may reap,
By and by, the terror runs deep,
The wise fall and the fools keep,
But forever I'll stay under our sky
Whistling just the same.

Then thunder may roar, and waves may crash,
Arrows may fall and knives may slash,
Resisting the horror in a mighty clash,
I'll take up my way, and fight for my sky,
That life may not be a game.

When love may conquer, and hearts be full,
When hope drives out hate, and washes the soul,
When my quest is done and the world be whole,
Then forever I'll stay under our sky,
Whistling just the same.

SOMETIMES I'M A SLOW LEARNER

Wilda Morris

As a college freshman more than fifty years ago,
I admired his dark hair and eyes, his smooth
complexion, and the clarity with which he taught
American Government. With him I studied
the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights,
There were no neatly pressed folds in the legs of his slacks
and his tie was often smudged, so I joked he must be single.
I returned from summer break and found he was gone.

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There were rumors of his arrest . . . an incident in a men's room somewhere. . . his dismissal from the faculty. That explained it all to my 1950s sophomore mind. I didn't stop to question the rightness of his firing or the wrongness of his act, never wondered if he was hungry for love and would have preferred to share a home with the guy he met in the men's room, something society would not permit. I never asked, Wasn't he created equal to all the straight men with wives and neat clothing? Forgive me, professor, wherever you are.

FIRE EATER

Psiren Blue

I heard her say it numbed the pain. She said with it, she could find happiness. Whenever they had their rows, she'd clutch a bottle tight. He'd storm out, and she'd nurse like a baby, mouth to bottle.

So I found myself wondering what sort of magic she found. What had she discovered? What magical elixir existed in her bottle—or was it only at the very bottom? My curiosity got the better of me one day, home alone and searching for adventure.

Happy with excitement, I started my search. Thoughts of my mother's glimmering eyes stayed my shaky hands. Whenever she drank from her bottle, she looked like Peter Pan returning to Neverland. Jealous, I kept searching. I found her hidden treasure easily.

A whiff caught me off guard. What was that smell? The burning made me think fire, some puff of hot smoke in my nose. But it was just my mind. I was just too giddy. I stared down at the clear liquid expectantly. Water that smells of fire? Surely this is the magic my mother keeps hidden. I thought again to my mother's glimmering eyes; they glowed with the same fire I held in the bottle. I swallowed my fear first, and then my mother's liquid magik.

Until then, I'd never given much thought to the fire-eaters I saw on the TV. But as the flame traveled down my throat and burned its way into my stomach, I wondered if I could breathe fire like they could.